& the Chief Justices of the High Courts to fill up all vacant posts of judges in the High Courts to expedite disposal of pending cases.

Filling up of vacancies of Judges in Karnataka High Court

2456. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) how may vacancies of judges are to be filled up in Karnataka High Court;

(b) what is the number of pending cases in Karnataka High Court and the steps taken for their speedy disposal;

(c) whether Karnataka Government have approached the High Court to reconsider its decision for setting up High Court bench at Hubli; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) The approved strength of Karnataka High Court is 32 permanent and 8 Additional Judges. Currently, 31 permanent Judges and 6 Additional Judges are in position leaving one vacancy of a permanent Judge and 2 vacancies of Additional Judges to be filled up. The requisite recommendation from the State constitutional authorities for filling up these vacancies are awaited.

(b) The number of pending cases in Karnataka High Court are 89,768 as on 30th June, 2000. The High Court of Karnataka has taken the following steps to reduce the pendency:—

(i) more practical categorisation and grouping of cases;

(ii) to take up for hearing as far as possible, all the cases listed for the particular day;

(iii) reservation of sufficient time slot for pending cases in chronological order; and

(iv) streamlining of administration through computer network.

(c) and (d) The Committee of 5 Judges constituted by the

Hon'ble Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court made an in-depth study and came to the conclusion that "it is neither desirable nor feasible to establish a Bench of the High Court at Hubli-Dharwad as proposed by the Government of Karnataka." After the views of the High Court were communicated to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, he addressed a letter to the then Hon'ble Chief Justice on 20.06.2000 requesting the latter as an alternative to recommend for the sitting of the High Court Bench in Circuit at Hubli-Dharwad till a permanent Bench is established. The then Acting Chief Justice sent a reply on 09.10.2000 stating that the reasons which weighed with the High Court against establishment of a Bench at Hubli-Dharwad would hold good in regard to establishment of a Circuit Bench as well.

Setting up of In-House Dispute Settlement Forums

2457. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE & COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government, Public Sector Undertakings and Banks have not yet set up in-house dispute settlement forums as directed by the Supreme Court long back and cases continue to be filed in the Courts and the cases are piling up;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and by when will such forums be set up to reduce court cases;

(c) whether appeals against the lower courts continue to be filed in higher courts as a matter of routine even where there is no point of law involved; and

(d) what action Government propose to take to check this tendency and to deal sternly with officals responsible for this?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) The Government has set up a High Power Committee consisting of Cabinet Secretary, Secretary, Department of Industrial Development, Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs; Finance Secretary and Secretary of the concerned Department to ensure that no litigation reaches the Court or a Tribunal without the matter having been first examined by the